

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 SES-02 SAA-01 SSM-03 /083 W
-----035162 301348Z /43

R 281000Z SEP 78
FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6816
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY IDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L 1999

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR, IZ
SUBJ: RETURN OF MICHAEL AFLAQ TO BAGHDAD

1. BAATH PARTY NATIONAL COMMAND SECRETARY GENERAL MICHEL AFLAQ HAS BEEN OUTSIDE IRAQ FOR SEVERAL MONTHS. HE HAS NOW RESURFACED IN BAGHDAD, AND PRESIDENT BAKR PAID A HIGHLY PUBLICIZED CALL ON HIH SEPTEMBER 26. PICTORIAL COVERAGE IN THE PRESS PORTRAYS BOTH MEN IN SEEMING GOOD HEALTH AND CONVIVIALITY.

2. COMMENT: AFLAQ'S ABSENCE GENERATED THE USUAL RUMORS OF DEFINITIVE DEPARTURE/EXILE. HIS PERIODIC ABSENCES CAN BE RELATED TO HIS OWN HEALTH PROBLEMS, AND/OR THOSE OF HIS SON IN PARIS, BUT THE FACT THAT HE WAS NOT IN BAGHDAD ON THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BAATHI REGIME IN IRAQ LENDS SOME CREDENCE TO STORIES OF SERIOUS POLICY DIFFERENCES WITH THE RULERS. AFLAQ, THE IDEOLOGICAL PURIST, HAS REPORTEDLY HAD DIFFICULTY ACCEPTING THE OCCASIONALLY MORE PRAGMATIC POLICY LINES TAKEN BY BAKR AND SADDAM HUSSEIN IN THE INTERESTS OF
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THE IRAQI STATE. THE IRAQI BAATH, FOR EXAMPLE, IS STRONGLY ENCOURAGING THE PARTY MEMBERSHIP OF NON-ARAB IRAQIS--KURDS, ASSYRIANS AND TURKMEN--WHILE AFLAQ'S FOCUS REMAINS SECULAR ARABISM.

3. A POLICY DIFFERENCE DOES NOT NECESSARILY CONNOTE A RUPTURE. JUST AS THE BAGHDAD LEADERSHIP VALUES AFLAQ'S PRESENCE AS A

SYMBOL OF THE REGIME'S BAATHI LEGITIMACY, SO MUST AFLAQ PAUSE
BEFORE MAKING A COMPLETE BREAK WITH COMRADES WHO ARE FAR MORE
RESPECTFUL OF HIS POSITION THAN THE ALTERNATE HOSTS IN DAMASCUS.
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Message Attributes

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Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
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Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, PARTY LEADERS
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Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 sep 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780399-1231
Format: TEL
From: BAGHDAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978098/aaaaagii.tel
Line Count: 66
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
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TAGS: PINR, IZ, (AFLAQ, MICHEL)
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